



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW

VOL. VIII, No. 3

DECEMBER, 1921

THE CONTROL OF MANUFACTURING BY THE CONFEDERATE GOVERNMENT *

The only manufactures over which the confederate government sought control were those which directly supplied the needs of the army. These were of two classes: (1) arms and munitions, which were under charge of the ordnance bureau; and (2) a more diverse group which included clothing, blankets, tents, shoes, wagons, saddles and harness, which for the most part were provided by the quartermaster's bureau. Because of the limitations of space it has been necessary to restrict this paper to the consideration of the manufacture of certain items of the second group, namely clothing and shoes.

It is well known that manufactures of any kind had developed only to a very limited extent in the south before 1861. Textile factories had made a beginning, but they contributed but a small part of the cloth annually consumed. When the war came, the people at home revived the ancient household arts of spinning and weaving while the government was left to uncertain resources for the material with which to clothe and shelter the men it called to service in its armies. As no civil machinery existed for handling this problem, and the task of providing these supplies for the army devolved almost entirely upon the quartermaster's bureau of the war department, it is with the activities of that organization that we shall be chiefly concerned.

Under the first act of congress that provided for a volunteer army, each soldier was required to furnish his own clothing,

* This paper was read at a joint session of the American historical association and the Mississippi valley historical association held in Washington, December 29, 1920.

for which he was to be paid.¹ This was soon followed by a system of commutation by which the private soldier or noncommissioned officer was allowed a stated sum for the purchase of clothing.² Somewhat later, the secretary of war was required to provide clothing whenever the soldier was unable or unwilling to supply himself by means of the commutation.³ This alternative system lasted for a little more than a year, until commutation was abolished by the act of October 8, 1862.⁴ From this time on the war department was required to furnish all clothing to privates and noncommissioned officers. It had now become almost impossible for the soldier to provide his own clothing.

With the first establishment of army camps, quartermaster's supply depots were set up at convenient points for the reception, storage, and distribution of shoes, clothing, blankets, tents, and other necessities. Some of these articles were bought by the government, while others were contributed by the families of the soldiers or by patriotic organizations. Ready-made clothing was not then a market staple; therefore, when the quartermaster purchased cloth he must turn it over to some band of patriotic women who would volunteer to make it up into clothing or else he must hire sewing-women to do the work. The first method proved unsatisfactory, and by the fall of 1861 army clothing was being made almost exclusively in the quartermaster's depots under military supervision. This was plainly due to the absence of adequate privately owned facilities. As the depots were located in the larger towns where the cost of living was rising rapidly, it was easy to get plenty of labor, and thousands of women and girls sought employment in the clothing shops. In some depots, as at Richmond and at Columbus, Georgia, shoe shops were set up beside the garment shops. In these the operatives were men.

These government shoe and clothing shops, usually referred

¹ "An act to provide for the public defense," approved March 6, 1861, *Statutes at large of the provisional government of the confederate states of America*, 1 session, chapter 26, sections 3, 4.

² "An act concerning transportation, etc.," approved May 21, 1861, *ibid.*, 2 session, chapter 39. The sum allowed was at first twenty-one dollars every six months. Later it was made twenty-five dollars.

³ Act of August 30, 1861, *ibid.*, 3 session, chapter 51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1 congress, 2 session, chapter 30.

to officially as "factories," continued operations until the end of the war, except where destroyed or withdrawn before the union armies, and in them were made practically all army shoes and clothing, except such as came through the blockade or were captured or were furnished by certain of the states to their own troops. Several of the shops were conspicuously well managed, especially those at Richmond, Augusta, Atlanta, and Columbus. Others were less successful, sometimes because of the inexperience of the officials in charge, sometimes because of the difficulties inherent in their location, in a few cases perhaps because of dishonesty. The officers in charge were subjected to many discouraging difficulties: irregular and insufficient supplies of materials and funds; frequent interference — by conscription, enrolling officers, and congressional inquiries — with their male operatives, foremen, agents, and officers; lack of proper direction from the quartermaster general's office; and the general confusion and demoralization in the service in districts remote from Richmond.

The proper equipment of the shops was retarded by the great scarcity not only of the requisite machinery but also of the means of making it. By an act of October 8, 1862, the congress authorized the president to import free of duty machinery or materials for the manufacture of clothing and shoes for the army. The privileges of the act might be extended to companies or individuals under regulations prescribed by the president.⁵ Under this act some machinery was brought in for the government; but that a much larger quantity was imported for the privately owned cloth and yarn mills is clearly indicated by their rapid increase, although this development was aided very much by the state governments, notably by that of North Carolina.

The army had been supplied with clothing during the first year of the war by various means, more or less fortuitous. The quartermaster general had come to rely for his supply of cloth upon the private cotton and woolen mills, all of which were small. By the summer of 1862 he found it necessary to enlarge his contracts with the factories. The factory owners had just

⁵ "An act to encourage the manufacture of clothing and shoes for the army," *ibid.*, chapter 31.

begun to realize what a boon a war may be to business men. Before secession their establishments had led a precarious existence because of the stifling competition of the great northern and English mills.⁶ The war had cut off that competition, there was a strong demand for more than they could turn out, and prices were rising rapidly. But this behavior of prices deranged all estimates of the purchasing officers, ate rapidly into the appropriations, and was the subject of constant complaint on the part of the quartermaster general. The underlying causes of this phenomenon are so familiar that they need not be detailed here. A contributing cause was the faulty purchasing organization which resulted in frequent competition between representatives of the different depots. Another, and very obvious one, was that the general stock of cloth on hand in the south in the spring of 1861 was about exhausted. Although competitive bidding between government agents was corrected to some extent by confining the contracts of each depot to a specified territory,⁷ competition by the general public was not eliminated. The manufacturers in many cases were finding larger profits in the rising public markets than in contracts with the quartermasters, and either hesitated or declined outright to bind themselves to long term agreements at fixed prices. Those who refused to contract were sometimes threatened with the impressment of their goods; but this mode of procuring supplies was distasteful to the higher authorities in these early days of the war and it does not appear that impressment of cloth was resorted to at this time. Many of the factory owners, to be sure, willingly continued to sell to the government a large portion of their products. For the others a means of coercion was preparing.

The first confederate conscription act, approved April 16, 1862, made no provision for the exemption of any person embraced by its terms; but it was followed five days later by an act which exempted directly several classes of persons and

⁶ See William Bailey to Governor John Milton, Tallahassee, June 15, 1864, in *War of the rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the union and confederate armies* (Washington, 1880-1901), series 4, vol. 3, p. 500.

⁷ A. C. Myers to M. G. Harmon, December 30, 1861, to V. K. Stevenson, January 4, 1862. Letter books, quartermaster general's office, in the confederate archives, United States war department, Washington, 3: 50, 76.

in addition "superintendents and operatives in wool and cotton factories, who may be exempted by the Secretary of War."⁸ Although the discretionary power conferred upon the secretary by this act clearly gave him the means of bringing pressure to bear upon the manufacturers to force them to contract with the government, exemptions seem to have been allowed so liberally that the situation was altered but little.⁹

The second conscription act, September 27, 1862, extended the military age to include men from thirty-five to forty-five years of age. It was followed by the second exemption act, October 11, 1862, which repealed the previous one and substituted a much more detailed list of persons to be exempted under certain conditions. Among these were shoemakers, tanners, wagonmakers, and other mechanics, and "superintendents and operators in wool and cotton factories, paper mills and superintendents and managers of wool carding machines, who may be exempted by the Secretary of War; *Provided*, the profits of such establishments shall not exceed seventy-five per centum upon the cost of production, to be determined upon oath of the parties"—subject, upon proof of violation to the secretary of war, to cancellation of the exemptions and the refusal of any whatsoever in the future.¹⁰

The provision which restricted profits derived from the labor of exempted persons to seventy-five per cent, on condition of the grant of exemption, was plainly an effort to check extortion and profiteering rather than to assist the quartermaster general, for it applied to goods sold to civilians as well as those sold to the army. It is significant that such a large profit was conceded. The southern people had always opposed in principle any direct interference by the government with legitimate private business, but feeling against the greedy extortioner who was blamed for the high prices and consequent privations, was so intense that all theoretical considerations were lost sight of.

⁸ "An act to exempt certain persons, etc.," *Confederate statutes at large*, 1 congress, 1 session, chapter 74.

⁹ There is some evidence that the conscription act for a time reduced factory production and embarrassed the quartermaster general by checking the flow of supplies to the army. See Myers to G. W. Randolph, May 23, 1862, in *Rebellion records*, series 4, vol. 1, p. 1127.

¹⁰ *Confederate statutes at large*, 1 congress, 2 session, chapter 45.

The exemption provisions were put into effect by general orders from the war department in November, 1862, which provided that each application for exemption should be accompanied by affidavit and be returned to the local commandant of conscription, and that the exemptions should be granted or refused by the enrolling officer.¹¹ This part of the law remained in effect until February, 1864. As far as providing for the labor needs of the factories was concerned, it seems to have worked fairly well for a while. Late in 1863 the pressure for men for the army made it harder to convince the enrolling officers of the necessity for the exemptions. The factories were so dependent upon this labor that they rarely dared to refuse to make contracts with some department of the government. When a disagreement arose the threat to enroll their "exempts" was usually enough to bring them to terms.¹² It came to be felt that the profit allowed was too high, especially in view of the rapid turnover and of the hardships and misery of the people. Again, the system worked badly because there was no incentive to the manufacturer to keep down costs; on the contrary he was tempted to increase them. There was much suspicion that cost accounts were padded; but there was as yet no adequate method of inspecting them, and the penalties were rarely imposed.

These considerations may have had some weight in the passage of the conscription act of February 17, 1864, but the main reason for that stringent law was the stern necessity of filling the ranks of the depleted army. By this measure the conscription age limits were extended to seventeen and fifty years, while all exemptions, except for religious opinions, were repealed, and a new and shorter list was substituted. Workers in factories were no longer exempted, but the president might grant details either from persons between forty-five and fifty years of age who had been enrolled but not yet called into the ranks, or from the army in the field.¹³ Under the general orders which put this law into effect the granting of the details was

¹¹ General orders no. 82," adjutant and inspector general's office, November 3, 1862. ¶ 8, "Provisions against extortion," in *Rebellion records*, series 4, vol. 2, pp. 160-168.

¹² A. C. Myers to W. E. Jackson, March 26, 1863, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 6: 172.

¹³ *Confederate statutes at large*, 1 congress, 4 session, chapter 45, sections 10, 11.

virtually placed in the hands of the local enrolling officer, who could make the grant for no longer than sixty days. At the end of that time the contractor must make a new application.¹⁴

Nothing was said in this act about the seventy-five per cent profit, and if it had not already ceased to be regarded as a proper one, it soon afterwards was abandoned. Perhaps General Lawton, who became quartermaster general in August, 1863, was a keener business man than Myers; at any rate, although the cost plus plan was continued, the profits allowed in 1864 were usually about thirty-three and one-third per cent, and sometimes they ran as low as twenty-five per cent.¹⁵ It was usually stipulated in the new contracts that the factory should sell at least two-thirds of its cotton goods and all its woollens to the quartermaster's bureau; and that the quartermaster general in turn should endeavor to procure from the secretary of war enough details to provide the necessary labor for the factory. It does not appear that the manufacturer was placed under any restriction as to the prices he should charge in the public market. Lawton gradually adopted a rigorous policy with his contractors and insisted upon the right to examine the books of any concern whose cost estimates were suspicious.¹⁶

In the spring of 1864 the affairs of the bureau were in such confusion in the gulf states that General Lawton put the whole business of contracting with the cloth factories of that region into the hands of Major Cunningham, who had distinguished himself by his efficient conduct of the depot and shops of Atlanta.¹⁷ Within two months Cunningham was able to report

¹⁴ "General orders no. 26," adjutant general's office, March 1, 1864, in *Rebellion records*, series 4, vol. 3, pp. 178-183; also Circular no. 8, bureau of conscription, March 18, 1864, *ibid.*, 217-224.

¹⁵ W. G. Ferguson to A. F. Cone, April 13, 1864, "Letters received," quartermaster general's office; A. R. Lawton to G. W. Cunningham, July 9, 1864, to W. G. Ferguson, September 12, 1864, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 8: 341, 9: 96.

¹⁶ Report on cost of production at Logan factory, Richmond, July 1, 1864, "Citizen's vouchers," quartermaster general's office; Lawton to Whitehead and Broocks (proprietors of above factory), July —, 1864, *ibid.*; Lawton to Cone, August 19, 1864, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 9: 2. This last is with reference to an investigation of the Manchester (Virginia) and Petersburg factories.

¹⁷ Lawton to Cunningham, April 9, 1864, *ibid.*, 8: 186; also circular issued by Lawton, April 23, 1864, a copy of which is in "Personal papers" of Cunningham, confederate archives, United States war department.

a considerable increase in government receipts from the factories in Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina. Some factories had refused to make contracts with him on the ground that they had contracts, though small ones, with other bureaus or departments. "In such exceptional cases," he wrote, "I am much embarrassed for want of proper orders by which to control the detail of their men, as they have but to contract with some other Department and I am without remedy."¹⁸ This was already a grievance with Lawton. The bureau of subsistence, the bureau of ordnance, and the navy department all had use for cloth of one sort or another; and each had obtained factory contracts. The contracts were usually small, but the factories by means of them had obtained the coveted and necessary details, and refused to make contracts with Lawton. They could dispose of their surplus product to better advantage than to the government. Lawton thereupon tried to induce the other bureaus and the secretary of the navy to transfer their contracts to him on condition that they receive the same amount of cloth as before. By getting control of the details, he could exact a larger part of the factory output. They agreed, but Colonel Northrop, the commissary general, insisted upon so much more cloth than Lawton could promise that the transfer was never completed.¹⁹ The secretary of the navy, however, consented to turn over to the quartermaster general his contract with the very important Vaucuse factory in South Carolina, which had been selling to the navy department only one tenth of its goods. It had refused to contract with the army because "independent in the matter of details." The transfer, said Lawton, would secure to the navy its regular supply of material, and "will enable this Bureau to increase the production at Government account by subjecting all Factories to a uniform system."²⁰

The bureau of conscription, which by order of the secretary

¹⁸ Cunningham to Lawton, May 12, 1864, *ibid*.

¹⁹ Lawton to S. P. Moore, March 31, 1864, to L. B. Northrop, to J. Gorgas, to A. L. Rives, April 1, 1864, to Cunningham, June 4, September 9, 1864. Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 8: 139-141, 269, 9: 163. Lawton from Gorgas, April 4, 1864, from John de Bree, April 16, 1864, from Northrop, April —, 1864. "Letters received," quartermaster general's office.

²⁰ Lawton to Stephen R. Mallory, September 3, 1864, to Cunningham, September 29, 1864. Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 9: 53, 163.

of war had been charged with the granting of details for factory labor, insisted upon a very stringent supervision of the business of the contractors. Doubtless this was because the conscription officers wished to make a good showing in keeping men in the army, but the effect was to strengthen control over the factories. In one case, which seems to have been typical, the enrolling officer refused a petition for a detail to a cotton factory in South Carolina unless the proprietors would agree to sell their surplus to the people at the same rate as to the government. The superintendent of conscription on appeal sustained the enrolling officer and explained that in order to stimulate production the earlier supervision had not imposed restrictions upon prices to the public; but now that production was probably at its maximum, it was proposed "to extend the supervision to the rates charged and to insist as a condition to the detail upon the disposal at reasonable rates of the articles manufactured." The thirty-three and one third per cent profit allowed by the quartermaster's bureau would be adopted as the rule. "The books of the concern should at all times be open to the inspection of the Enrolling Officer," and limiting the details to specific periods would result in frequent inspections and guard against the abuses of the cost plus plan.²¹

The conscription bureau was abolished by law in March, 1865, and its duties devolved upon the general officers commanding the reserves in each state. But the confederacy was in dissolution, and in the confusion of the break-up which followed there is little likelihood that any new policy towards the factories was instituted.

Through the virtual control of raw materials the quartermaster's bureau obtained another line of control over the textile factories. Raw cotton was plentiful in the southern tier of states until the end of the war; but after the quartermaster general had established a close supervision over the traffic of the railways and had put into force a system of priorities for army supplies, such as food and munitions, the feeble railways

²¹ C. B. Duffield to the secretary of war, January 16, 1865, "Letters received," quartermaster general's office. This is an endorsement on the petition of W. A. Finger to be detailed as superintendent of Valley Falls cotton factory. The first endorsement is by Lieutenant G. N. Marshall, enrolling officer.

were so clogged that there was little opportunity for factories to get cotton, except locally, unless the quartermasters consented to its transportation. The Virginia factories came to this situation by the end of 1863; in 1864 even those in the cotton states were dependent upon the quartermaster general for a large portion of their supplies. When the raw material must be brought, under military orders, over an army-controlled railroad to a factory operating with labor detailed from the army, there was no way for the manufacturer to avoid selling to the government as much of his product as was demanded.²²

Wool became scarce at the very beginning of the war. In fact, the south produced but a small part of the wool it consumed, and within a little more than a year some of the most productive regions were in the hands of the union armies. Agents were sent out early in 1862 into all the wool growing sections under orders to purchase all that was on the market at reasonable prices and to impress the rest. Great expectations of the Texas crop were cherished, but the clip of 1862 was sold before the government agents were in the field, and the major part of the clip of 1863 did not reach the Mississippi river in time to cross before the taking of Vicksburg and Port Hudson. The tax in kind, from which much had been expected, yielded little. Importations, through the blockade, from England, though helpful and important, still left a serious shortage. In 1864 a large proportion of the trousers sent to the army were entirely of cotton. In 1863 the government bureaus had obtained a virtual monopoly of the wool on the market — some escaped by clandestine exchange — and were able to require the woollen factories to make up the whole of it for government account. This monopoly was maintained for the rest of the war.

Thus far nothing has been said of the relations of the several state governments to the factories and of the consequences to the business of the confederate officials. North Carolina was the only state whose policies in this respect will be noted here. In the early days of the war when commutation was allowed the soldier who provided himself with clothing, the general assembly adopted a resolution that the state should furnish its sol-

²² Lawton to W. G. Ferguson, September 12, 1864, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 9:96. For a discussion of the confederate railway problem, see the *American historical review*, 22: 794-810.

diers with clothing, shoes, and blankets and receive in payment the commutation money allowed by the war department.²³ This was agreed to by the war department, and, though it seems to have been unsatisfactory to some of the North Carolina troops in the field and proved a source of confusion in the quartermaster's bureau, the plan continued in force even after the abolition of the commutation in October, 1862.²⁴ Thereafter the state sold the clothing to the confederate quartermasters on the condition that it was to be issued to North Carolina troops exclusively. The state, of course, obtained these supplies either by contract with the factories within its borders, or by purchase abroad. "Exempts" and details were evidently allowed to these factories by the war department as well as to those contracting with the quartermaster general. General Myers, who had previously endeavored without success to persuade the North Carolina authorities to cancel the agreement, took the position that the abolition of commutation had itself abrogated the arrangement with the state. He therefore renewed his appeals that North Carolina place herself on the same basis as other states by surrendering to the quartermaster's bureau her contracts with the cloth factories and tanneries — from which the confederate officials were virtually excluded — thus allowing troops from other states less fortunately supplied with such factories to share their products. The state authorities — Vance was now governor — steadily refused.²⁵

This situation lasted for nearly two years. Early in 1864 when the clothing situation was desperate, Quartermaster General Lawton instructed the post quartermaster at Raleigh to endeavor to get contracts for the bureau with the factories of North Carolina, if it could be done without coming into conflict with the state authorities.²⁶ This quartermaster, Major Peirce,

²³ *Public laws of the state of North Carolina passed by the general assembly at its extra session, 1861*, pp. 129-130. The resolution was adopted September 20, 1861.

²⁴ Myers to J. G. Martin, adjutant and inspector general of North Carolina, May 22, June 5, 1862, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 4: 230, 275.

²⁵ Myers to Governor H. T. Clark, June 12, 1862, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 4: 292, to Zebulon B. Vance, September 17, December 8, 1862, Vance's letter books, 1: 8, 68; Vance to Myers, October 14, 1862, *ibid.*, 25.

²⁶ Lawton to W. W. Peirce, February 25, 1864, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 8: 50.

first tried again to induce the state authorities to agree to allow their contracts to be taken over by the confederacy in order that troops from other states might share in the clothing. Again the reply, by direction of Vance, was flat refusal to allow any of the North Carolina clothing to go to other troops until the governor should first satisfy himself that there was a surplus.²⁷ Lawton next inquired whether the state would object to the quartermaster's bureau making contracts on its own account with the North Carolina factories. He was informed that, owing to the scarcity of wool, the product of the woolen mills would not be shared, but that the confederate government was at liberty to make contracts with the cotton factories, since but few furnished the state more than one third of their output.²⁸

Lee's men were ragged and barefoot; the needs of the army would admit of no further dalliance. Lawton now determined to move directly upon the factories themselves. More than one third of the whole number of textile factories within the entire confederacy east of the Mississippi were in North Carolina, and among these were also the largest and best equipped.²⁹ Though exact figures are lacking, it seems probable that the factories of North Carolina from which the confederate government hitherto had been in effect excluded, were producing half of all the cloth in the confederacy in 1864.

In August, 1864, Lawton gave instructions that careful investigation be made of the prices at which cotton and woolen goods, including yarns, could be had in North Carolina; also that a list of all the factories be made, with a report on the capacity of each, what part of its product was contracted to the state, and whether it would make a contract with the confederate government.³⁰ The factories seemed reluctant to send in written state-

²⁷ Peirce to Lawton, with enclosures, March 17, 1864, "Letters received," quartermaster general's office.

²⁸ Peirce to Lawton, with enclosures, April 2, 1864; Gatlin to Peirce, April 14, 1864. "Letters received," quartermaster general's office.

²⁹ See the statement of Lawton to James A. Seddon, September 28, 1864, in *Rebellion records*, series 4, vol. 3, p. 691. There are lists of the factories in the report of Major James Sloan to W. B. B. Cross of the quartermaster general's office, September 1, 1864, in "Letters received," quartermaster general's office, and in "Cash book," quartermaster general's department of North Carolina, in the archives of the North Carolina historical commission, in Raleigh, p. 1.

³⁰ Lawton to Major L. R. Chisman, August 2, 1864, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 8: 385.

ments, and an agent had to visit them. It developed that although the state received only about one third of the product on the average, the factory owners were unwilling to contract any more of it to the confederate authorities, alleging that what was left was needed to barter for raw materials and labor, as the currency was valueless.³¹ Just at the time the agent of the quartermaster general was making the round of the factories and hearing their several reasons for their inability to enter into contracts, the bureau of conscription began calling in the details whose services the factories had been enjoying.

"This," wrote Lawton's agent, "looks to the factories as if everything was arranged in Richmond with special reference to forcing them into measures, and they so express themselves. It is not very material whether they are correct or not; but if they think so it makes it easier for me to make contracts."³² Although Lawton almost certainly had nothing to do with the the action of the conscript bureau, which in fact was calling in details in other states as well and interfering seriously with his activities, Governor Vance shared the suspicions of the factories, his wrath blazed up, and he seized the opportunity for exercising his favorite recreation of "trying a tilt with the Confederate government." He charged heatedly that Lawton was trying to break up the state's business with the factories in order to seize it all for his own department, and he demanded impetuously to know whether the confederate administration was giving countenance to the nefarious scheme. Lawton, with some asperity, denied the charge, and recounted the history of the troubles over the North Carolina factories, the growing scarcity of supplies available for the troops of other states, and the injustice and ill-consequences of the selfish policy followed by the state authorities.³³

³¹ Circular of Chisman to factory owners, August 15, 1864; Major Sloan to Cross, August 24, September 1, 1864. "Letters received," quartermaster general's office. See also Lawton to Sloan, August 19, 1864, to William A. Miller, September 2, 28, 1864, in Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 9: 2, 48, 158; and reports of Miller to Lawton, September 12, 17, 1864, in "Letters received," quartermaster general's office.

³² Miller to Lawton, September 19, 1864, *ibid.*

³³ Vance to Seddon, September 19, 1864, in *Rebellion records*, series 4, vol. 3, vol. 3, p. 671; Lawton to Seddon, September 28, 1864, *ibid.*, 690-692. See also Vance to General Holmes, October 25, 1864, *ibid.*, 746.

Unfortunately the records thus far available do not disclose much concerning the consequences of this controversy. That the state continued to send large amounts of shoes, clothing, and blankets to its troops in the field is clear from examination of its account with the confederate government, month by month, from September 30, 1864, to January 31, 1865.³⁴ That the stores of shoes and clothing in the quartermaster's depots in Virginia and the Carolinas increased considerably is indicated by frequent statements of Lawton in December, 1864, and January, 1865, that plenty was on hand.³⁵ As it is unlikely that large importations could have come into Wilmington, where the blockade was tightening rapidly, one might infer that the North Carolina factories had supplied the increase, were it not for a tabulated report in February, 1865, by the bureau of conscription of persons detailed for labor in the various states. North Carolina shows a total of 261, against 387 for South Carolina, 797 for Georgia, and 927 for Virginia. There were no details shown for contractors with the quartermaster's bureau in North Carolina.³⁶

The experiences of the government bureaus in procuring leather call for a separate account. By far the greatest consumer of leather was the quartermaster's bureau, which furnished shoes for the army and harness for baggage trains. The ordnance bureau also used leather for artillery harness and saddles. It was not until the early spring of 1862 that leather became noticeably scarce. In June, post quartermasters were instructed to make a special effort to procure shoes either by

³⁴ For September, 1864, \$674,094; for October, \$562,722.50; for November, \$467,133; for December, \$852,844; for January, 1865, \$456,518. Manuscripts in the archives of the North Carolina historical commission. Even when allowance is made for higher prices, these figures show much larger sales than for any previous period of equal length, if it may be assumed that the earlier accounts are in full.

³⁵ Lawton to Lieutenant Colonel J. L. Corley, December 12, 1864, to A. B. Bragg, January 3, 1865, in *Rebellion records*, series 1, vol. 42, part 3, p. 1268, and vol. 46, part 2, p. 1009; to Miller and others, committee of the house of representatives, December 12, 1864, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 9: 345; to Miller, January 27, 1865, in *Rebellion records*, series 4, vol. 3, pp. 1039-1041. Against Lawton's optimistic statements in the last citation above may be set one from Cunningham to Lawton, March 17, 1865, deploring the scarcity of cotton goods for shirts and underwear, his inability to pay contractors, and the suffering in the armies for each of these articles. "Miscellaneous letters received," quartermaster general's office.

³⁶ *Rebellion records*, series 4, vol. 3, pp. 1099-1109.

purchase or by having them made by workmen under their own supervision.³⁷ In July the supply was so short that experiments were made with canvas topped shoes, and not infrequently afterwards these cloth shoes were used. The tanneries everywhere reported a shortage in the supply of hides and raised their prices. This resulted in an order of the secretary of war fixing prices for the several grades of leather and authorizing impressment when these prices were not accepted.³⁸ The commissary officers who killed beeves for the army were directed to turn over all hides to the quartermasters. Although agents were sent out in search for them, only a small proportion of the hides which the country afforded was obtained. The indifference and carelessness of the commissary officers, who allowed the green hides to spoil for lack of a little attention, the unwillingness of farmers to give up their only chance to obtain leather for their own use, and the preference of the tanners for the greater profit in private traffic combined to defeat the expectations of the quartermaster general.³⁹

As in the case of the cloth factories, the quartermasters began to press the advantage given them by the conscription acts. Tanners who found themselves or their hands liable to conscription were glad to make contracts which would enable them to stay out of the army and keep their business going. The contract usually provided that the tanner should receive one third of the leather made from the hides furnished by the government. He was usually required to furnish bond to cover the value of the hides, and, frequently, to sell to the government his third of the leather at a fixed price.⁴⁰ The post quartermaster of

³⁷ Myers to Captain F. W. Dillard, June 11, 1862, to Madison McAfee, Roland Rhett, and others, June 12, 1862, to Major T. F. Washington, June 19, 1862, to Major J. L. Calhoun, June 23, 1862. Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 4: 290, 294, 320, 329.

³⁸ W. S. Downer and J. B. Ferguson to Larkin Smith, July 28, 1862, "Letters received," quartermaster general's office, and the orders endorsed thereon by the secretary of war.

³⁹ "General orders no. 101," adjutant general's office, December 9, 1862, in *Rebellion records*, series 4, vol. 2, p. 232. See also Smith to Dillard, July 18, 1862, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 4: 400; J. J. Smylie to R. P. Waller, October 17, 1862, "Letters received," quartermaster general's office.

⁴⁰ A contract, a printed form filled in, made by J. M. Hackett and A. B. Smith, High Point, North Carolina, with Major Waller, quartermaster at Richmond, November 1, 1862, may be found, *ibid.*

each larger district was given exclusive control over contracts within his district.

As soon as the bureau began to obtain leather it set up its own shops for the making of shoes. By an act of congress of October 9, 1862, the president was authorized, on requisition of the quartermaster general, to detail from the army persons skilled in the manufacture of shoes, not to exceed two thousand; and it was made the duty of the quartermaster general to place them at suitable points in shops, under regulations prescribed by himself, to make shoes for the army. These details were allowed extra pay.⁴¹ The most conspicuous and successful of these government shoe shops was that at Columbus, Georgia, under charge of Major F. W. Dillard. Others of importance were at Richmond, at Atlanta, and somewhat later at Montgomery. These government shops had tanneries attached, but received a good part of their leather from private tanneries under contract. In some parts of the country, as in the Carolinas, private shoe factories continued in operation for a time and but few government shops were established. Due in part to the greater economy effected by concentration, a consolidation of the government shoe factories began in the summer of 1863,⁴² and was carried further in 1864.

The visible supply of leather, and therefore of shoes, harness, and saddles, was declining rapidly.⁴³ Although the blockade runners continued to bring in both leather and shoes, so many cargoes were destroyed that the relief furnished was wholly

⁴¹ *Confederate statutes at large*, 1 congress, 2 session, chapter 37. See also W. W. Lester and William J. Bromwell, *Digest of the military and naval laws of the confederate states of America* (Columbia, S. C., 1864), 93.

⁴² For instance the Atlanta shops were transferred to Columbus and there consolidated with Dillard's; the Danville workers were sent to Knoxville. See Myers to Cunningham, April 25, 1863, to W. G. Sutherlin, May 13, 1863, in Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 6: 316, 379. Several shoe shops at other points in Alabama were consolidated, first at Selma, later at Montgomery. Inspection report, Lieutenant Colonel E. E. McLean to A. R. Lawton, December 6, 1863, in "Personal papers" of McLean, in the confederate archives; A. R. Lawton to Gillaspie, June 23, 1864, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 8: 305.

⁴³ During the battle of Gettysburg, General Lee's quartermaster telegraphed a requisition for 20,000 pairs of shoes. Myers' reply is significant: "I have been in anticipation of receiving stores from you and not to supply you." Myers to Corley, July 3, 1863, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 6: 539.

inadequate.⁴⁴ The loss of the Mississippi river sharply reduced the number of beef cattle that had been crossing from Texas and western Louisiana. The best cattle regions east of the Mississippi were now overrun by the enemy or were being subjected to destructive raids. There can be no doubt that the number of cattle within the confederate lines east of the Mississippi fell off rapidly. A situation which was bad enough was made worse by the frequent gross carelessness or inefficiency of the officers and agents charged with preserving, collecting and shipping the hides, by the refusal of commissaries, who desired to make purchases with hides, to turn them over to the quartermasters,⁴⁵ and, as demoralization grew, by the absence of proper control over distant quartermasters and agents, and by downright theft. Thousands of hides were kept out of the hands of the government by speculators, and evidence is not lacking that some minor officials themselves carried on private speculation in this much sought after commodity. The system of collecting hides had become so demoralized that in August, 1864, Major Dillard, whose success with his shoe factory at Columbus has already been mentioned, was given supreme control over the business in all the region south of North Carolina and Tennessee and over contracts for tanning as well.⁴⁶

The arrangements for tanning were also in need of revision. As the supply of hides fell off, fewer tanneries were needed. The constant pressure for the return of details to the army, and the difficulty of safeguarding the interests of the government in out-of-the-way places made it clearly advisable to reduce the number of government contractors and return the unnecessary details.⁴⁷ Under instructions from the quarter-

⁴⁴ Lawton to General Robert E. Lee, January 20, 1864, to General Joseph E. Johnston, February 9, 1864. *Ibid.*, 7: 554, 8: 15.

⁴⁵ There are numerous instances of this. Dillard from J. F. Cummings, November 16, 1864, from J. L. Locke, November 28, 1864, A. Myers to Goodman, December 27, 1864, Goodman to Lawton, January 9, 1865. "Letters received," quartermaster general's office.

⁴⁶ Circular of Quartermaster General Lawton, September 19, 1864, personal papers of F. W. Dillard, in the confederate archives.

⁴⁷ "The facilities for tanning are so ample throughout the whole country that there would be no difficulty in tanning for money and on reasonable rates ten times the number of hides that can be obtained." Lawton to Major J. C. Green, August 24, 1864, Letter books, quartermaster general's office, 9: 13.

master general the number of contract-tanneries in Virginia was reduced in October, 1864, from one hundred and twenty-five to about a dozen. In South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, Major Dillard reported a total reduction of from two hundred to sixty-seven, which was thought still too many.⁴⁸ The tanneries which were retained were required to work entirely for the government — since the quartermaster's bureau was taking all the hides whether on the market or in private storage — and to tan at a fixed money rate instead of taking pay in leather.

The business of making shoes for the army was now monopolized by the government shops through their control of hides and leather and their lower cost of production.⁴⁹ Moreover, they could easily make up all of the scanty supply of leather available. But even the government's own establishments were not free from business worries. The uncertain supply of raw materials was perplexing; but the interference of the conscription bureau with their details of workmen was even more annoying. The records of the quartermaster general's office show graphically how closely the service was combed for men to fill the ranks in the field. Every list of workers or officers was scrutinized with care lest some able-bodied man should slip through. The complaint of Captain W. M. Gillaspie, in charge of the shoe factory at Montgomery, must have described the experiences of others in similar positions. "It takes fully one half of the time of one of my clerks and about as much of my own to attend to the detailing of men. I no sooner have a man trained and somewhat efficient than he is ordered to report to camp, and then after considerable delay I have his services replaced by a new one and an invalid, in most cases, who is one half the time in the Hospital and the other half not able to do much work."⁵⁰

So scanty are the records of their activities during the last months of the war that little can be said of the condition of the

⁴⁸ Lawton to W. G. Ferguson, October 12, 1864, to Dillard, October 21, 1864. *Ibid.*, 195, 223. Dillard to Lawton, October 22, November 2, 1864, "Letters received," quartermaster general's office.

⁴⁹ A. U. Davis to Governor M. L. Bonham, July 25, 1863, *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Gillaspie to Cross, assistant quartermaster general, November 4, 1864, *ibid.* The Richmond shoe factory was required to give up to the army 66 out of 171 employees in January, 1865.

factories or of their relations with the government. Some were destroyed by Sherman and other raiders; some closed down for want of material, or labor, or funds; some continued to the end. Though no change in the general policy of the government is discoverable, there is some indication that in the weakness and confusion which preceded dissolution, the system of control, once so rigid, relaxed.

It seems significant that the confederate government never devised nor even attempted to devise any civil machinery for the control or regulation of the factories upon whose production so much depended. The reason is clear: the supply of the army was regarded as solely a military problem. It was an army affair; leave it to the war department! Though an urgent, it was a temporary problem which would be over with the coming of peace. Perhaps the southerners disliked the idea of a permanent arrangement for interfering with private property rights; but probably they never thought of that at all. The military control which was gradually established was rigid, but partial, uneven, short-sighted. The sole purpose was to get supplies for the army at as reasonable a cost as possible — to exploit the factories, not to develop them for the benefit of the community at large. After all, these things were inevitable under a government struggling for bare existence and dependent upon undeveloped and inadequate resources.

CHARLES W. RAMSDELL

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
AUSTIN